



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **JURY CONVICTS FORMER LIBERTY COUPLE OF FRAUD SCHEME**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a former Liberty, Mo., couple who operated a Northland construction company have been convicted in a \$231,000 fraud scheme that involved a bank construction loan and a credit card account.

**Jay Charles Wantland**, 40, and **Suzanne M. Keisling**, 33, husband and wife who formerly lived in Liberty, Mo., but have been living in Ohio, were found guilty of bank fraud at the conclusion of a trial that began on March 15, 2004. **Wantland** was also found guilty of credit card fraud. Jurors deliberated about two and a half hours before returning a guilty verdict to U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner yesterday afternoon.

**Wantland** and **Keisling** defrauded Clayco State Bank of more than \$185,000, Graves said, and **Wantland** defrauded American Express of nearly \$46,000.

**Keisling** incorporated a construction company, C-Builders, on Aug. 20, 1998. C-Builders obtained two residential construction loans at Clayco State Bank to develop two lots at the Charleston Harbor subdivision in Kansas City, Mo. A \$190,400 loan was approved on Nov. 24, 1998, and a \$228,600 loan was approved on Feb. 5, 1999.

Graves explained that it is typical in these types of loans for the loan proceeds to be released by the bank to the builder upon the presentation of proof that the builder has expended the funds shown on the invoice on the home under construction. In order to execute their scheme and obtain the funds from Clayco State Bank, Graves said, **Wantland** and **Keisling** presented altered and fabricated invoices to the bank to get their loan disbursements. Some invoices were totally contrived, Graves added, while others were invoices that had been altered in some material way to deceive bank personnel into believing that the work had been performed as stated.

In addition to bogus invoices, **Wantland** and **Keisling** supplied C-Builders checks to the bank ostensibly to show that the payments to subcontractors and suppliers had been made. However, Graves said, a significant number of these checks totaling more than \$100,000 were never cashed by the named payee; hence, the funds represented by these checks never left the defendants' possession. Had the bank known that the checks were never processed for payment, it would not have made the disbursements of the loan draws as requested by the defendants.

As a result of this scheme, the defendants allegedly caused Clayco State Bank to incur a loss of \$185,203.

**Wantland** was also convicted of using a fraudulently obtained credit card between March 26, 1999 and Sept. 16, 1999 in Liberty. **Wantland** applied for an American Express credit card for C-Builders, on March 26, 1999. On the application for the card, he falsely indicated that the applicant was Keisling's brother. In reality, her brother was totally unaware that **Wantland** had used his name, his birth date, and his Social Security number on the application for the credit card.

After the credit card application was approved, Graves said, **Wantland** used the card to purchase goods and service. Between the time the card was approved by American Express, and the time the defendants left town in June of 1999, they had a balance of approximately \$45,901 in unpaid charges.

Under federal statutes, **Wantland** could be subject to a sentence of up to 40 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$1,001,000. **Keisling** could be subject to a sentence of up to 30 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$1 million. Their sentences will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Daniel Stewart. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at  
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